



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FACT SHEET

MAYOR SANDERS CITES PROGRESS ON FIRE PROTECTION

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS MADE ON BRUSH THINNING, AERIAL FIREFIGHTING

With a continued multi-year drought and the first major surge of Santa Ana winds expected this weekend, Mayor Jerry Sanders announced that San Diego has made significant progress toward meeting this season's challenges — but stressed that more is needed to adequately address the region's fire needs.

“Let me assure you, San Diego has never been better prepared for wildfire season than we are this year,” Sanders said. “But that doesn't mean we're in the clear; we still have work to do.”

BRUSH-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MOST ROBUST IN CITY'S HISTORY

The city has dramatically enhanced its brush-management program in the city's parks and open space this year. Using grants from FEMA and nearly tripling the general fund dollars dedicated to brush management, the city is spending more than \$3 million this year to thin nearly 600 acres of brush in canyons and parks that are within 100 feet of homes and structures.

This marks an eightfold increase over prior years in acreage covered by the brush-thinning program. For more than a decade, the city had only allocated enough funding to thin about 70 acres per year.

BRUSH MANAGEMENT FUNDING HISTORY

	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY09-10 Total
General Fund	\$391,087	\$1,045,125	\$2,018,469	\$1,871,260	\$3,889,729
FEMA	\$0	\$0	\$1,108,000	\$1,255,209	\$2,363,209
Total	\$391,087	\$1,045,125	\$3,126,469	\$3,126,469	\$6,252,938
Acres Thinned	70	210	590	590	1,180

In addition, the mayor announced that, with the assistance of Rep. Brian Bilbray, the city has been awarded another \$1 million federal grant to help fund brush-management efforts.

FIREFIGHTING CAPABILITIES ENHANCED SINCE 2007 WILDFIRES

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's firefighting resources have increased as well, the mayor said. Since last year's wildfires, the city has acquired a new firefighting helicopter, Copter 2, greatly enhancing the department's firefighting capacity.

The city also signed an agreement last month with Cal-Fire that allows San Diego Fire-Rescue to conduct nighttime aerial firefighting operations over state-owned land in the backcountry, which could help prevent blazes from reaching San Diego's suburbs as they did in the 2003 and 2007 wildfires.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE THIS SEASON

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department offers these tips on preparing for wildfire season:

- Thin brush 100 feet from your home. Creating this defensible space can make the difference between a home burning down or not.
- Trim larger ornamental plants next to the home. If not properly trimmed, this vegetation could easily catch fire, igniting the eaves, siding and sending embers into attic vents.
- Sweep gutters, roofs, and eaves regularly; remove dead branches around chimneys.
- Develop an evacuation checklist and keep important documents such as insurance documents handy.
- Register for Alert San Diego on the City of San Diego's home page (www.sandiego.gov) to receive emergency notifications on your mobile phone.
- Always heed public safety officials' evacuation orders.

More tips on fire prevention and safety are available on the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's Web site at www.sandiego.gov/fireandems/index.shtml.